

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MANILA 00940 200305Z

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TAGS: SHUM, RP

SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEVELOPMENT

JOINT EMBASSY-AID MESSAGE

REF: STATE 3725, STATE 1421, MANILA 0052, 75 AID A-687

SUMMARY: MISSION FULLY AGREES AND HAS TAKEN STEPS TO ENSURE THAT HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS ARE INCORPORATED INTO CURRENT DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES USAID SUPPORTS. INITIATIVES SUGGESTED BY AID/W IN HUMAN RIGHTS FIELD WOULD PROBABLY BE NON-STARTERS AND COULD JEPARDIZE CURRENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS. PAST DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS HAVE HAD POSITIVE HUMAN RIGHTS ASPECTS. SINCE PURSUIT OF NARROWLY FOCUSED HUMAN RIGHTS PROGRAMS COULD POLITICIZE ALL USAID PROJECTS AND ENDANGER CURRENT PROJECTS, WE RECOMMEND USAID FOCUS ON PRESENT DEVELOPMENTS PROJECTS AND ATTEMPT STRENGTHEN THEIR HUMAN RIGHTS ASPECTS. END SUMMARY.

1. MISSION FULLY AGREES WITH REF AIDTO CIRCULAR A-687 THAT HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS MUST BE INCORPORATED INTO THE DESIGN, IMPLEMENTATION, AND EVALUATION OF THE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES USAID SUPPORTS. USAID HAS TAKEN GREAT CARE THAT DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE TO THE PHILIPPINES IS USED
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 MANILA 00940 200305Z

TO HELP SOLVE DEVELOPMENT PROBLEMS IN ACCORDANCE WITH

STRATEGY RECENTLY REAFFIRMED BY THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND FOOD ASSISTANCE ACT OF 1975. U.S.-ASSISTED GOP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS ARE DESIGNED TO INCREASE SUBSTANTIALY THE PARTICIPATION OF THE POOR; THIS IS PARTICULARLY TRUE OF RURAL ELECTRIFICATION DEVELOPMENT, LOCAL WATER DEVELOPMENT, SMALL FARMER INCOME, LAND REFORM, RURAL ROADS, SMALL IRRIGATION, NUTRITION AND POPULATION, WHILE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT IS DESIGNED TO INCREASE THE ABILITY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT TO RESPOND TO THE NEEDS OF THEIR CONSTITUENT POPULATIONS.

2. REGARDING INITIATIVES SPECIFICALLY ADDRESSED TO HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERNS AS EXEMPLIFIED BY PARAS (A) THRU (C),
PAGE 3 OF REF A-687, COMMENTS FOLLOW:

(A) AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL AND ICJ VISIT PHILIPPINES ON OCCASION TO DETERMINE CONDITION OF POLITICAL PRISONERS, BUT THEY HAVE NO OTHER ACTIVITIES HERE. USAID PARTICIPATION THESE ACTIVITIES WOULD BE INAPPROPRIATE UNDER ANY CONDITIONS AND PARTICULARLY SO UNDER MARTIAL LAW.

(B) TO THE EXTENT FEASIBLE, USAID-SUPPORTED PROGRAMS ARE DESIGNED TO HELP THE URBAN AND RURAL POOR TO HAVE EFFECTIVE ACCESS TO THE RIGHTS AND PROTECTIONS PROVIDED FOR THEM UNDER LAW AND UNDER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS. ALL USAID-SUPPORTED PROGRAMS ARE CONDUCTED WITHOUT REGARD TO SEX, CREED, ETHNIC BACKGROUND OR POLITICAL AFFILIATION. WIDE PUBLICITY IS DIRECTED TOWARD THE POOR TO INSURE FULL KNOWLEDGE OF THEIR RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE, THROUGH ADVERTISING MEDIA. RADIO AND PRINTED ADVERTISEMENTS ARE PRODUCED NOT ONLY IN ENGLISH AND PHILIPINO, BUT IN ALL OTHER SIGNIFICANT DIALECTS AND LANGUAGES. IN PROGRAMS REQUIRING PERSONAL REGISTRATION OR APPLICATION, SPECIAL PROVISION IS MADE TO ASSIST THOSE INCAPABLE OF COMPLETING THE DOCUMENTATION UNAIDED. IN CERTAIN PROGRAMS, SUCH AS RURAL ELECTRIFICATION, WHICH INVOLVE INDIVIDUALLY FINANCED HOME WIRING COSTS, PERSONAL LOANS AT CONCESSIONAL TERMS ARE EXTENDED TO THOSE WHO OTHERWISE COULD NOT AFFORD THE INITIAL COST OF ELECTRIC SERVICES. CURRENT USAID PROGRAMS ARE, OF COURSE, SUPPORTIVE OF

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PAGE 03 MANILA 00940 200305Z

GOP DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES. THEY HAVE BEEN WORKED OUT IN CONJUNCTION WITH GOP AND ARE IMPLEMENTED IN PART BY GOP OFFICIALS. ATTEMPT TO INTRODUCE PROGRAMS NOT RELATED TO DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS AND WHICH SOUGHT IN EFFECT TO CHALLENGE GOP PROGRAMS ON HUMAN RIGHTS GROUNDS ALONE WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY BE REGARDED BY GOP AS UNWARRANTED AND UNCONSTRUCTIVE INTERUSION IN PHILIPPINE INTERNAL AFFAIRS. SUCH CHANGES IN USAID APPROACH WOULD LEAD TO CHALLENGING ENTIRE USAID PROGRAM HERE.

(C) MISSION PREPARED EXAMINE PROPOSALS FOR STUDIES AND CONFERENCES MADE BY WASHINGTON. TO SUCCEED, THEY WOULD HAVE TO BE REGIONAL IN SCOPE AND FOCUS ON THE CONSTRUCTIVE AND CREATIVE ASPECTS OF HUMAN RIGHTS AS A PART OF DEVELOPMENT RATHER THAN AS A SUBJECT OF ITS OWN.

3. OUR PAST EXPERIENCE INDICATES THAT USAID-SUPPORTED PROGRAMS HAVE PROMOTED SIGNIFICANT ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CHANGES WHICH HAVE HAD POSITIVE HUMAN RIGHTS OUTCOMES OVER THE LONGER TERM. RURAL ELECTRIFICATION COOPERATIVES INVOLVING HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF BENEFICIARIES FROM AMONG THE POOR HAVE IN A VERY SHORT TIME DEMONSTRATED THEIR ABILITY TO MANAGE THEIR OWN AFFAIRS INCLUDING THE OPERATION, MAINTENANCE AND EXTENSION OF MODERN COMPLEX SERVICE SYSTEMS. TENS OF THOUSANDS OF THE POOREST AND MOST HELPLESS HAVE HAD THEIR RIGHTS TO FOOD, TO LIFE AND TO THE FUTURE RESTORED THROUGH THE NUTRITION PROGRAM. MILLIONS OF FARMERS HAVE RECEIVED LOW INTEREST PRODUCTION LOANS WITHOUT COLLATERAL, GUARANTEED BY THEIR FELLOW MEMBERS OF SMALL FARMER ORGANIZATIONS. SMALL IRRIGATORS ASSOCIATIONS INVOLVE THOUSANDS OF SMALL FARMERS IN THE PLANNING, IMPLEMENTATION, OPERATION, EXTENSION AND FINANCING OF THEIR OWN IRRIGATION SYSTEMS. THESE LESSONS OF ORGANIZATION FOR THE BETTER MANAGEMENT OF IMPORTANT AFFAIRS ARE NOT LOST ONCE THE IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVE IS ACHIEVED AND WILL LIKELY INCREASINGLY BE APPLIED TO SEEK SOLUTIONS TO OTHER COMMON PROBLEMS.

4. RESPONSE ABOVE SHOULD MAKE CLEAR THAT USAID IS AND HAS BEEN ACTIVELY PROMOTING DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS WHICH INCORPORATE HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS IN BROAD AND CONSTRUCTIVE CONTEXT. THESE PROJECTS HAVE BENEFITED LARGE NUMBERS IN NEEDY CATEGORIES. ATTEMPT TO INTRODUCE PROJECTS UNRELATED TO CONSTRUCTIVE DEVELOPMENT FOCUS OF TRADITIONAL USAID ROLE AND EXCLUSIVELY FOCUSED ON

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 MANILA 00940 200305Z

HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES WOULD INVITE SHARP REJOINDER FROM GOP THAT COULD (A) THREATEN TO POLITICIZE ALL USAID PROJECTS; (B) PROVOKE CANCELLATION OF CURRENT DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS. WE BELIEVE NOTHING WOULD BE GAINED AND MUCH COULD BE LOST BY ATTEMPT. WE WOULD ACCORDINGLY RECOMMEND THAT USAID CONTINUE SUPPORT CURRENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS WHILE REMAINING ALERT TO OPPORTUNITIES TO STRENGTHEN THEIR HUMAN RIGHTS ASPECTS IN CONSTRUCTIVE VENUE. STULL

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